

HIGHWAY 101 CORRIDOR



A Caltrans Publication

Dedicated to the Eureka/Arcata - Route 101 - Corridor Improvement Project, located in Humboldt County.

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Aerial Photograph of the 101 Corridor Project Area.

A NOTE FROM THE PROJECT MANAGER

Caltrans is happy to bring to you the second newsletter for the Eureka-Arcata Route 101 Corridor Improvement Project. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep interested parties including citizens, resource and regulatory agencies, special interest groups, businesses, and other public agencies apprised of recent accomplishments and informed of upcoming activities relative to this project.

Public review and feedback are important elements to the project planning and environmental review process. So, in this issue, we have highlighted questions that have been asked by the public regarding project alternatives. These questions were received at the May 2003 Public Information Meeting.

We continue to welcome your interest and involvement in this project. If you have any questions or would like to discuss the project, please use the contact information listed to the left.

*Sincerely,
Kimberly Floyd*

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In addition to this newsletter, Caltrans has held three public meetings – March 7, 2000, September 20, 2001, and May 15, 2003. We have also formed a Citizen Advisory Committee, and maintain a project website.

The most recent meeting was a Public Information Meeting held in Eureka on May 15, 2003. The purpose of the meeting was to share the most current developments relative to preliminary engineering and environmental studies. This was also an opportunity for the public to review all of the project information and provide comments back to the Project Development Team. Approximately 100 people attended.

PROJECT WEBSITE

This project has an Internet site that can be bookmarked to find the latest project information. If you were unable to attend previous meetings, or would like to review project related materials, please visit the website (listed below). Your comments can also be sent to staff at this website location.

Check out the website:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1projects/eurarccor/index.htm>

CONTACT INFORMATION

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FAQ's - YOUR QUESTIONS – OUR RESPONSES

Public comment cards were collected at the May 2003 Public Information Meeting. The comment cards included some questions. Below is our response to these questions.

IF THE SAFETY CORRIDOR IS WORKING, WHY DOES CALTRANS NEED TO TAKE OTHER ACTION?

The Safety Corridor was implemented as an interim measure to improve safety in the corridor until the Route 101 Corridor Improvement Project can be implemented. During its first year, the Safety Corridor has experienced 45 percent less collisions, including 80% less at intersections.

While Caltrans is pleased with the success of the Safety Corridor to date, it will likely become less effective over time because traffic volumes are expected to increase almost 50% by the year 2030. That is why Caltrans is currently evaluating long-term improvement alternatives. Our analyses will determine how each project alternative meets long term safety, operational and level of service criteria.

SAFETY CRITERIA

As traffic volumes continue to increase in the corridor, left-turn movements across Route 101 will result in a greater probability of fatal and injury collisions.

OPERATIONAL CRITERIA

Merge movements from the left will continue to create the potential for higher collisions, especially as volumes increase and merging into the fast lane becomes more difficult. Movements crossing Route 101 will become more difficult as traffic



Caltrans is pleased with the success of the Safety Corridor to date

volumes and delay increase. And, delays caused by increased traffic over time could increase traffic volumes on Route 255 and Old Arcata Road as commuters look for alternative routes.

LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) CRITERIA

LOS is a qualitative measure for describing operational conditions within a traffic stream or at an intersection. LOS is designated by a letter A-F, with A representing the least delay or congestion and F representing the most delay or congestion. Alternatives being studied must meet a LOS D (drivers experience minimal delay) on the corridor into the year 2030. Caltrans, and our project sponsor, Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), want to ensure vehicle safety and acceptable traffic operating conditions on Route 101, now and in the future. The Safety Corridor is addressing these

concerns now, but additional improvements will be necessary to meet long-term safety, operational needs, and LOS needs.

WHY IS CALTRANS NOT INSTALLING TRAFFIC SIGNALS?

During the project studies phase, the Project Development Team* determined that signals would not be a feasible alternative. Signals at T-Type intersections have approximately two or more times the collision rate than the current configuration (stop and yield signs). Many inquiries have been made about installing traffic signals at the intersections. Some of these inquiries have used the K-Mart signal in Eureka as an example. However, there are differences between these locations that make this an unsuitable comparison. The K-Mart signal is located in a section of Route 101 which is an undivided conventional highway with a two-way left turn lane, in a commercial setting, with adjacent traffic

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*** Project Development Team** includes representatives from the following: Caltrans, HCAOG, City of Eureka, City of Arcata, County of Humboldt, California Fish & Game, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services, California Coastal Commission, National Marine Fishery Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Highway Patrol, Federal Highway Administration, Eureka Police Department, and Table Bluff Reservation staff.

FAQ's – continued

signals. However, the Route 101 Corridor is a four-lane, divided expressway with limited access. Vehicle speeds are higher on expressways and access points are fewer. Also, the speed differential between stationary and moving vehicles at expressway intersections is greater than signalized intersections on urban conventional highways. This larger speed differential would potentially result in increase in the severity of collisions. When Caltrans recently reviewed four isolated existing signals on expressways in Northern California, it was found that all four of the signals were operating with a fatal-plus injury collision rate above the statewide average, and at one location more than twice the statewide average. The average daily number of vehicles at the four signal locations is much less than that in the Route 101 Corridor. A project to replace one of the signal locations with an interchange is currently underway.

Signals on Route 101 at Indianola and Airport Road would be expected to yield similar results. In addition to an increase in collisions, it is expected that even with additional lanes, increased congestion would cause traffic to divert to secondary routes such as Route 255 and Old Arcata Road. It was also determined that the installation of signalized intersections would result in significant wetland impacts, due to required highway widening through these intersections. For the above reasons, traffic signals were dropped from further consideration.

COMING UP!**Topics for our Upcoming Newsletters**

- ***Winter Newsletter*** – Discussion on Wetland & NEPA 404 Issues.
- ***Spring Newsletter*** – Public Notification of the Draft Environmental Document Availability & Public Hearing Date.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Highlighted below, are lists of accomplishments for the past year.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS**WINTER 2002-2003**

- Draft Hazardous Materials Report - **Complete**
- Begin Draft Community Impact Analysis
- Draft Archeological Survey Report - **Complete**
- Draft Air Quality Study - **Complete**
- Draft Energy Study - **Complete**

SPRING 2003

- Archaeological Area of Potential Effect (APE) Map - **Complete**
- Historical APE map - **Complete**
- Draft Traffic Impact Study - **Complete**
- Draft Floodplain Analysis - **Complete**
- Visual Impact Simulations for Interchange Alternatives – **Complete**
- Public Information Meeting Held – May 15, 2003

SUMMER 2003

- Draft Noise Study - **Complete**
- Draft Water Quality Study – **Complete**
- Begin Draft Natural Environmental Study

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- Draft Environmental Doc. Circulation – Spring 2004



If you would like to join our mailing list, please send your request along with your name and address to:

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Or E-mail:

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About Our Organization...

The California Department of Transportation is headquartered in Sacramento, California. Responsible for many facets of transportation, we seek to improve mobility across California's scenic North Coast. We do this in partnership with state and local governmental agencies, as well as regional transportation planning agencies that are chartered throughout the District. District 1 is headquartered in the City of Eureka, Humboldt County, California. It includes the counties of Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, and Mendocino. The District Director is Rick Knapp.

The North Coast depends on our highway infrastructure for commuting, commerce, and tourism. Route 101 has often been characterized as the "lifeline of the North Coast." Maintaining that route, and our highway system in general, in terrain that varies from mountainous to valley profiles, and from lake settings to coastline can be very challenging; especially in those areas where rainfall amounts are high and soil conditions are unstable.

"Caltrans improves mobility across California"

Department of Transportation

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